

Kate Smith Stamp Issued in D.C. May 27

On May 27, 2010, in Washington, D.C., the USPS issued a 44¢ Kate Smith commemorative in a pane of 20. Shown here, the stamp art duplicates artwork created for the cover of a CD titled “Kate Smith: The Songbird of the South,” which itself was based on a photograph of Smith taken in the 1960s and converted to the album cover by Mark Ranshaw.

The stamp designer, Art director and Typographer was Ethel Kessler. A total of 40 million stamps were printed using a gravure process. Plate numbers in the four corners of the pane consist of the letter “V” to identify Avery Dennison as the printer followed by four single digits, one for each print colors: cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

For first day cancellations, the usual rules apply. Purchase the stamps from the USPS or stamp dealers, affix them to covers addressed to yourself or others and send them in an outer envelope to Kate Smith Stamp, Special Cancellations, PO Box 92282, Washington, DC 20090-2282. The deadline for submitting cancel requests is July 27, 2010.

In a career that spanned almost five decades, Smith recorded nearly 600 songs. At least 20 of her records sold more than a million copies, including three religious albums.

From <www.KateSmith.org> we learn that she was born on May 1, 1907 in Washington, D.C. She performed locally in theaters and at

nightclubs and was discovered by a New York City show producer in 1926. In 1930 Columbia Records vice president Ted Collins, became her partner and manager and put her on the radio in 1931. An immediate success on the air, she also broke the record for longevity at the legendary Palace Theatre. Her theme song was “When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain”, whose lyrics she helped write.

Kate Smith is best known for her rendition of “God Bless America,” which was composed by Irving Berlin and has been called ‘America’s unofficial national anthem.’ In 1943 she sang it in the Irving Berlin movie *This is the Army*. Berlin regarded the song as his most important composition and Kate Smith predicted that it would still be sung long after she was gone.

Sports fans will remember her as the singing good-luck charm for the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team with her renditions of “God Bless America” helping to inspire them to Stanley Cups in 1974 and 1975. In her last performance, she sang it on a bicentennial special just before July 4, 1976.

Other successes included long-running popular radio and television variety programs including an hourly TV program, “The Kate Smith Evening Hour”. She died in Raleigh, N.C., June 17, 1986.

